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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
**INFORMATION REPORT**

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Student Attitudes Toward Current Issues/  
Observations on "Komsomolskaya Pravda"/Soviet  
Shops and Stores

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1. Q. Did the Soviet youth of the non-official variety whom you met hold any fresh or controversial viewpoints opposed to or different from what passes for the current Party line?
  - A. No, they did not. That was one of our biggest sources of argument with them. They would disagree with each other on cultural questions but never on political matters. We'd point out an obvious fallacy in their thinking and ask, 'How can you believe this?' They'd never budge an inch, however.
2. Q. What is their true thinking either pro or con the Party line on:
  - a. Stalin?
    - A. Stalin was a real hero to them. They say that they loved him and that the reason there are so many pictures of him is that the people demanded them even against Stalin's wishes.
    - b. The new regime and its leading personalities.
      - A. They don't rank Malenkov with Stalin and Lenin. Lenin is given first place, Stalin second, and Malenkov is less godlike and a rather poor third. He is more a common fellow and not revered as the other two are.
    - c. The so-called new economic look?
      - A. They are working to build up their agricultural production now and admit that it has lagged. They are optimistic about getting some of the things that we have. I asked two different persons what they wanted that we have. They each answered clothing, housing, and consumer goods in general.

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- d. Soviet foreign policy, particularly with respect to Germany and the Korean war and truce?
- A. No mention was made of Germany. They said that their foreign policy was peace and protection and that South Korea had started the war with our help.
- e. The "H" bomb?
- A. We joked with them a lot about this. Our interpreter had a wonderful sense of humor and we treated many matters like this very lightly. We told them that we had planted "A" bombs in every public building that we'd visited. Our guide asked what kind of an "H" bomb we had, one, two, or three. I didn't know what he was talking about so I said, "Seven". He just laughed.
- f. War?
- A. They felt that war was not inevitable and that it would start only if the US attacked the USSR. We answered, "Well, then there won't be any war, because the US will never start one." They replied, "Trusts control the US, Trusts profit by war, thus, there may be war started by the US." They had quite a list of names of US political leaders, including Bedell Smith, who owned shares of stocks in large companies. We pointed out to them how many US citizens owned stock and that this didn't influence their desire for war. We also suggested that they add Charles E Wilson's name to their lists. They were a little startled at this.
- g. The purge of Beria?
- A. They despised Beria. They scratched his face out of group pictures and removed his picture from their walls. The Palace of Rest and Culture in Tbilisi was supposedly designed by Beria's sister. When we visited it, we asked pointedly whether a woman had designed it. The answer was, "No". We then asked point blank whether Beria's sister was the architect. Again the answer was "No", and we never did determine whether she did the work and they wouldn't admit it, or whether our information was incorrect.
- h. Nationalism?
- A. Nationalism seemed particularly strong in Georgia. They boast of their schools, athletes, and everything else. A taxi driver in Kiev was proud of the fact that their TV was better than that in Moscow, but we ascribed this to simple civic pride.
- i. The US, UK and France?
- A. Our interpreters liked the US best, and we got along very well with them. They said that peace would be easier with the US than with the UK or France. They didn't like the British because of their attitude and pride about their Queen. We were treated as a US Delegation. There was a distinction between a delegation and tourists. The word "delegation" was a magic one which opened doors for us wherever we went. It caused people to give up their seats in theaters, got railroad reservations when there were none to be had, and prevented some very lengthy waiting in line.
- j. President Eisenhower?
- A. They like Eisenhower. They say that he seems like a likeable fellow and a good president.

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k. The Komsomols?

A. There was no criticism of this organization but a lot of bragging about it.

l. The Soviet Army?

A. They make a great fuss over their military heroes and were very anxious for us to see murals depicting army successes. These are placed in the subway terminals.

3. Q. What questions regarding the US were most frequently asked?

A. They asked why Paul Robeson wasn't allowed to come to the USSR to accept the Stalin Peace Prize. We asked them in turn what Robeson had done to merit a Peace Prize, and they had no answer. They also asked about Howard Fast, airbases around the USSR, the Korean war, and the reason for our refusal to allow Soviet chess players to enter the US.

4. Q. In connection with the above, where did their real interest from an informative point of view seem to lie?

A. Their interests were very elementary. They asked about the average marriage age, the requirements for getting a driver's license, about traffic laws, and the school system. They seemed genuinely interested in the availability of scholarships but possibly were primed to ask this since we got the question often. We talked about sex and sports. They were proud of the size of their stadiums, but were interested when I was able to quote the seating capacity of several in the US and UK which are as big or bigger than theirs. I was interested to know whether they played golf and even took a ball along with me, but they didn't know what it was for. They wanted to know why we had an age limit for drinking, how long our military service was, and about our automobiles and electrical facilities. Our interpreter's wife was a construction engineer and we established between ourselves that Soviet women wear the trousers in their families just as they do in ours. Finally, they were interested in exchanging swear words and we spent some time teaching them the proper pronunciation and inflection of several choice expletives.

5. Q. Did any Soviet youth whom you met express a desire to visit the US?

A. Very much so. We always asked them this and they claim that they can get an exit visa but not permission from our government to enter the US.

6. Q. To what extent does "Komsomolskaya Pravda" decide what stories and articles it will run on its own initiative and to what extent on directives from above?

A. We tried to ascertain this and couldn't exactly, except that they use Tass news dispatches. All or most of the editorial board are Party members. They have a sort of "Letters to the Editor" column but these look as though they may be planted by the editorial board.

7. Q. Had the shops in Moscow and outside recently increased their assortment of consumer goods?

A. They told us that there has been a great increase in the last three years, especially in consumer goods and cars. Prices are supposedly the same throughout the USSR.

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